

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 04449 01 OF 02 031618Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----086562 031622Z /45

O 031459Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2348

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4449

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: IS, LE, MILI

SUBJ: ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON

REF: (A) STATE 83526, (B) TEL AVIV 4395, (C) BEIRUT 1771,
(D) JERUSALEM 0960

1. AS REPORTED IN REF B, I HAD PRODDED WEIZMAN SATURDAY
TO GET MOVING ON SOME STATEMENT OUTLINING A SCHEDULE FOR
WITHDRAWAL. MET WITH WEIZMAN THIS MORNING, APRIL 3,
WITH COLONEL WILLIAMS, TO FOLLOW UP. WEIZMAN TOLD ME
THAT AS A RESULT OF MY SATURDAY CALL, CHIEF OF STAFF
GUR HAD MET WITH UN COORDINATOR SIILASVUO ON SUNDAY TO
DISCUSS BOTH THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE UNIFIL FORCES AND

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THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES.

2. DURING THEIR SUNDAY MEETING, GUR TOLD SIILASVUO THAT
WHEN THE NORWEGIAN BATTALION IS DEPLOYED IN "SOUTHERN
FATAHLAND," ISRAELI FORCES WILL WITHDRAW TO THE AL MARI
AREA. THIS IS APPROXIMATELY TEN KM SOUTH OF THE CURRENT
POSITION OF ISRAELI FORWARD TROOPS IN THAT AREA.

SIILASVUO ANTICIPATED THAT THE NORWEGIAN BATTALION WOULD BE SO DEPLOYED IN FOUR OR FIVE DAYS AND WEIZMAN SAID THAT THE IDF WITHDRAWAL WOULD START AT THAT TIME AND WOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF NEXT WEEK.

3. I STRESSED THE NEED FOR A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY, TO INCLUDE AT LEAST TWO ELEMENTS: FIRST, THAT ISRAEL ACCEPTED ITS RESPONSIBILITY UNDER SC 425 TO WITHDRAW, AND HAD ALREADY WITHDRAWN SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF FORCES; AND, SECONDLY, THAT THEY WERE WORKING OUT A SCHEDULE FOR FURTHER WITHDRAWALS COORDINATED WITH THE UN. WEIZMAN AGREED, AND SAID SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD BE ISSUED BY THE END OF THE DAY. (WE WILL SEND IN THE STATEMENT IMMEDIATELY UPON RELEASE.) HE SAID HE WOULD MAKE A FURTHER STATEMENT ON THE WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE IN A DAY OR TWO, AS SOON AS THINGS WERE WORKED OUT WITH SIILASVUO.

4. CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION ABOUT SOUTHERN LEBANON, WEIZMAN SAID THAT CURRENT ISRAELI CONCERNS ARE FOCUSED UPON: (A) THE TYRE SITUATION; (B) THE BRIDGES; (C) THE FRENCH (WHICH RELATES TO BOTH THE TYRE SITUATION AND THE BRIDGES); AND, (D) WHAT ACTIONS THE UN WILL TAKE IF THE FATAH ATTEMPTS TO INFILTRATE BACK INTO THE AREA. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WILL BE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO DO SOMETHING IF, WITH ABOUT 4,000 UN TROOPS IN SOUTH LEBANON, A ROCKET COMES IN FROM PALESTINIANS WHO HAVE
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INFILTRATED. WILL THE UN FORCES CONTROL SOUTH LEBANON SO THAT IT WILL NOT AGAIN BECOME A PALESTINIAN BASE?

5. WEIZMAN ASKED ME WHY THE REFUGEES WERE NOT RETURNING, SAYING THAT THE IDF IS ALL READY TO RECEIVE THEM. I TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BRING UP THE QUESTION POSED BY BEIRUT CONCERNING THE REPORTED ISRAELI POLICY OF NOT ALLOWING REFUGEES TO RETURN NORTH ONCE THEY HAD COME SOUTH (REF C). (EARLIER IN THE DAY WILLIAMS HAD RECEIVED A DENIAL OF SUCH A POLICY FROM IDF SOURCES.) WEIZMAN SAID THAT HE KNEW OF NO SUCH POLICY BUT WOULD CHECK IT OUT AND LET US KNOW. HE AGREED THAT ANY SUCH ACTIONS WOULD RUN COUNTER TO ISRAELI INTEREST IN ENCOURAGING REFUGEE RETURN.

6. WEIZMAN THEN ASKED "WHERE IS SARKIS AND HIS CROWD." I EMPHASIZED THAT WE ARE TALKING DAILY TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND EXERTING ALL POSSIBLE PRESSURES TO GET LEBANESE REPRESENTATION INTO SOUTH LEBANON. I STRESSED

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EXDIS

THAT WE SHARED WEIZMAN'S CONCERNS AND HIS PERCEPTION
THAT A LEBANESE PRESENCE IS REQUIRED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
I POINTED OUT THE MOVES BOUTROS IS TAKING IN NEW YORK
TO STRENGTHEN HIS STAND THAT THE REQUIREMENT EXISTS TO
DEPLOY UN AND LEBANESE EVERYWHERE IN THE SOUTH, NOT ONLY
WHERE THE IDF CURRENTLY IS.

7. CLOSING OUT THAT PORTION OF OUR MEETING WHICH
DEALT WITH LEBANON, WEIZMAN MADE THE REMARK THAT HE
"HOPES TO BE OUT BY INDEPENDENCE DAY (MAY 11). BUT
THIS WILL BASICALLY DEPEND ON THE UN." I ASKED, "HOW
ABOUT THE END OF APRIL?" AND HE AGAIN REITERATED THAT
THE PROBLEM IS THE CONTROL OF THE UN AND THE INTRODUCTION
OF LEBANESE FORCES.

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8. I AM CONFIDENT THAT WEIZMAN APPRECIATES THE REQUIRE-

MENT FOR AN IMMEDIATE STATEMENT AND WILL GET ONE OUT THIS AFTERNOON. I AM NOT AT ALL AS CONFIDENT THAT THE WITHDRAWAL ON THE TYRE FRONT WILL TAKE PLACE AS SPEEDILY AS THAT APPARENTLY PLANNED FOR IN THE SOUTHERN FATAH-LAND AREA. WEIZMAN OBVIOUSLY HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE THAT THE UN WILL HAVE EITHER THE ABILITY OR THE WILL TO FACE UP TO STOPPING CONTINUED MOVEMENT OF PALESTINIANS INTO TYRE OR TO ATTEMPT TO CONTROL TYRE ITSELF. CONTINUED EFFORTS BY ALL OF US TO PERSUADE THE UN THAT TYRE IS THE PLACE FOR THEIR HEADQUARTERS, NOT SIDON, IS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT.

9. WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED JERUSALEM 960 (REF D) WHICH GIVES SIILASVUO'S VIEW OF MEETING WITH GUR IN MUCH MORE DETAIL THAN WEIZMAN'S REPORT. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT DETECT ANY SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE IN THE BASIC PROBLEM. WEIZMAN LINKED IDF WITHDRAWAL TO EFFECTIVE DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL AS DID GUR. SIILASVUO AND GUR ARE POLES APART AS FAR AS TYRE IS CONCERNED. I DO NOT BELIEVE WEIZMAN IS ABOUT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WESTERN POSITIONS OVERWATCHING TYRE UNTIL HE IS CONVINCED THAT UNIFIL HAS ESTABLISHED CONTROL IN THAT AREA. AS I SEE IT, THIS MEANS UNIFIL TROOPS AND HEADQUARTERS IN TYRE, NOT SOUTH OF SIDON WHERE THE OFFICE AND BILLETING ARRANGEMENTS MAY BE MORE SATISFACTORY.
LEWIS

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